

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

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SUBJECT: TEXT OF OCTOBER 13 KAMM ARTICLE

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF OCT 13 HENRY KAMM
ARTICLE:

1. A COMPULSORY REVIVAL OF A LONG NEGLECTED TRIBAL RITE
IS DISRUPTING CHAD'S PUBLIC LIFE, TERRORIZING MEMBERS OF
THE SMALL EDUCATED ELITE AND, ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES,
HAS CAUSED A NUMBER OF DEATHS.

2. THE VICTIMS OF THE REPORTED KILLINGS INCLUDE A NUMBER
OF PROTESTANT CLERGYMEN. THEY WERE SEIZED DURING POLICE
ROUND-UPS OF MEN OF ALL AGES FOR THE TRIBAL-INITIATION
RITES AND PRESUMABLY KILLED, FOR HAVING REFUSED TO COMMIT
ACTS COUNTER TO THEIR FAITH.

3. THE MOST RECENT KILLINGS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE OCCURRED
IN AUGUST. RELIABLE SOURCES SAID THAT, NEAR THE SOUTHERN
TOWN OF DONOMANGA, AN EVANGELIST WAS SEWN UP INSIDE A
TOM-TOM AND DIED AFTER THREE WEEKS OF TORTURE. TWO OTHER
EVANGELISTS AND A PASTOR WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN BURIED
ALIVE NEAR GOULAY.

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4. MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, IN THE FIRST WAVE OF INITIATION

rites, 13 pastors were arrested and taken to the prison in Sarh, Chad's second city, known as Fort-Archambault until last year. Three or four days later, they were driven to the local house of President Ngarta Tombalbaye, himself at least a nominal Protestant.

5. INFORMED CIRCLES HAVE LITTLE HOPE THAT THEY REMAIN ALIVE.

6. THE INITIATION RITE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF WHAT PRESIDENT Tombalbaye described in August, 1973 as Chad's cultural revolution. African authenticity and a rejection of Western ways are the essential themes, and Yondo, the initiation rite, in its extreme expression.

7. IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM A PUBERTY RITE, IT HAS BEEN REVIVED BY MR. Tombalbaye's ethnic group, the Saras, who live along the Shari River. They make up almost a fourth of the country's population of 4 million and have dominated its politics since independence was granted by France in 1960.

8. ALTHOUGH YONDO IS SECRET AND NO INITIATE IS ALLOWED TO TALK ABOUT IT, ENOUGH IS KNOWN TO TERRIFY THOSE LIKELY TO BE CALLED.

9. THE MEN ARE TAKEN INTO THE BUSH FOR A PERIOD OF 45 DAYS. BUT THE RAINY SEASON, WHICH MAKES MOST ROADS IMPASSABLE, EXTEND THE INITIATION OF THE PRESENT CONTINGENT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. SOME OF THE MEN ARE JUST BEGINNING TO RETURN. IN THE BUSH THEY ARE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF AN INITIATOR, WHO EXACTS TOTAL OBEDIENCE.

10. NAKED EXCEPT FOR LOINCLOTHS, THE MEN- WHO INCLUDE COLLEGE PROFESSORS, MINISTERS AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS, BANKERS AND BUSINESSMEN, REARED IN A SOCIETY LESS THAN 10 PER CENT LITERATE- ARE SUBJECTED TO A SORT OF TRIAL BY ORDEAL TO RID THEM OF THEIR FOREIGN FAILINGS AND MAKE

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THEM FIT FOR AUTHENTIC CHADIAN SOCIETY.

11. THE ORDEALS ARE KNOWN TO INCLUDE FLOGGINGS, BURNING WITH COALS, SCARRING, SEXUAL INDIGNITIES, MOCK BURIALS, DRUGGING AND ACTS OF HUMILIATION. ANTHROPOLOGISTS HAVE REPORTED THAT, EVEN AMONG THE BOYS WHO HAVE KNOWN ONLY LIFE IN THE BUSH, YONDO CAUSES DEATHS OR LASTING DAMAGE. ITS PHYSICAL AND PSYCHIC TRAUMA ON MEMBERS OF THE EURO-

PEAN-EDUCATED URBANIZED ELITE CAN ONLY BE GUESSED AT.

12. ITS DISRUPTIVE EFFECT ON LIFE IS VISIBLE. THE OPEN-

ING OF THE UNIVERSITY HAS HAD TO BE PUT OFF UNTIL THE END OF THIS MONTH. LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE SERVICE IS SPORADIC AND NOT AVAILABLE MOST EVENINGS AND SUNDAY AFTERNOONS. AIRLINES, BANKS AND PUBLIC SERVICES ARE HAMPERED BY REDUCTIONS IN THEIR SMALL NUMBERS OF QUALIFIED PEOPLE.

13. IN ITS FIRST YEAR, THE RESULTS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION HAVE BEEN NOMINAL. THE ONLY LEGAL POLITICAL PARTY, FORMERLY THE CHADIAN PROGRESSIVE PARTY HAS BEEN RENAMED THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT OF THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

14. EVERY CITIZEN HAS HAD TO AFRICANIZE HIS NAME. FRANCOISE TOMBALBAYE BECAME NGARTA TOMBALBAYE, BUT THE PRESIDENT PRECEDES HIS NEW NAME WITH A FRENCH DESIGNATION, "LE GRAND COMPATRIOTE," THE STYLE IN WHICH HE IS REGULARLY REFERRED TO. OTHER CHADIANS MUST BE ADDRESSED SIMPLY AS "COMPATRIOTE."

15. THE AFRICANIZATION OF NAMES HAS BROUGHT A NEEDED CASH FLOW INTO THE NATIONAL TREASURY BECAUSE ALL PERSONAL DOCUMENTS HAD TO BE REISSUED, FOR A FEE. THE LEBANESE OWNER OF A PHARMACY ON THE MAIN STREET OF THIS CAPITAL, KNOWN UNTIL LAST YEAR AS FORT-LAMY, HAS HAD THE FORESIGHT TO RECHRISTEN HIS SHOP "PHARMACY OF THE CHADIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION." KISSINGER

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